

Appl. No.: 09/803,545
Amdt. dated December 16, 2005
Reply to Office action of September 20, 2005

AMENDMENTS

Please cancel claim 211 without prejudice, add claims 215-220, and amend the claims as provided in the following claim listing.

Claims

1-178. (Canceled).

179. (Currently amended) An automated method for facilitating a user's selection of residential or business products or services provided to a property having a geographic location, the method comprising:

maintaining a database comprising product or service offerings in a plurality of offering categories ~~available to said geographic location, wherein each of said product or service offerings is offered in and associated with one or more geographic markets, and wherein each of the markets associated with each said product or service offering is definable in said database independently and with differing levels of geographic detail;~~

presenting a user with a plurality of said offering categories, wherein each of said offering categories corresponds to a product or service type ~~available to said geographic location;~~

receiving from said user:

(a) said geographic location of said property; and

(b) user's selection of one or more offering categories;

determining product or service offerings maintained in said database (i) that correspond to said offering categories selected by said user, and (ii) that are associated with markets that correspond to said geographic location provided by said user;

generating for each offering category selected by said user, a summary of ~~one or more product or service offerings available from one or more providers of said product or services to said geographic location~~ each said product or service offering associated with markets that correspond to said geographic location provided by said user; and

transmitting to said user said summary of offerings.

180. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 179, further comprising:

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receiving from said user an order for one or more product or service offerings in one or more of said offering categories.

181. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 180, further comprising:

making available to each provider of said product or service offerings ordered by said user each said received order corresponding to said provider's product or service offering.

182. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 181, further comprising:

providing said user with access to one or more user accounts, each said account corresponding to a product or service offering ordered by said user.

183. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 182, wherein said one or more user accounts are maintained by said providers of said product or service offerings.

184. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 182, wherein said user may manage said user account.

185. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 184, wherein said management of said user account enables said user to perform one or more of the following functions: verify the status of the order related to said product or service offering, update said user's profile related to said account, retrieve reports, pay for said product or service, modify said product or service offering, or terminate said product or service.

186. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 179, wherein an offering category ~~may comprise~~ comprises one or more of electric utility, natural gas, metered water, telephone, television, satellite, cable, internet, security system, change of address, post office, furniture, appliance, storage, moving, pet care, childcare, bottled water, periodical, newspaper, delivery, grocery, parking, club membership, motor vehicle, dry cleaning, prepared food delivery, insurance,

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housekeeping, driver's license, voter registration, financial, banking, wake-up/reminder, and repair and maintenance products or services.

187. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 179, further comprising:

establishing one or more relationships with one or more product or service providers in one or more of said offering categories.

188. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 187, wherein said one or more relationships are by agreement with one or more product or service providers.

189. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 179, wherein said database has one or more of said product or service offerings for each of said offering categories stored in a standardized data structure.

190. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 189, wherein said data structure comprises a plan component, a package component, and a feature component, wherein said plan component indicates a base offering, said package component indicates collections of features purchasable as a unit, and said feature component indicates individually purchasable augmentations to the base offering ~~that are individually purchasable~~.

191. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 179, further comprising:

providing brand partners with an account through which said brand partners may provide one or more customization elements or customer accounts.

192. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 179, further comprising:

providing brand partners with an account through which said brand partners may track usage of said automated method.

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193. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 179, wherein said offering categories comprise a plurality of utilities, products, or services.

194. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 179, wherein one or more product or service offerings comprise one or more product or service plans.

195. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 179, wherein said varying levels of geographic detail of said geographic location comprises one or more of a country, a region, a state, a county, a governmental subdivision, a street address, a 5-digit zip code, ~~or~~ and a 9-digit zip code.

196. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 195, wherein said governmental subdivision comprises one or more of a city, town, township, borough ~~or~~ and parish.

197. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 195, wherein said street address comprises one or more of a street name, post office box, rural route number, floor ~~or~~ and unit.

198. (Currently amended) An automated method for facilitating a user's selection of residential or business products or services provided to a property having a geographic location, the method comprising:

maintaining a database comprising product or service plans for ~~more than~~ one or more offering ~~eategy~~ categories, ~~each of said service plans have geographic product or service areas in which said product or service plans are offered wherein each of said product or service plans is offered in and associated with one or more geographic markets, and wherein each of the markets associated with each said product or service plan is definable in said database independently and with differing levels of geographic detail;~~

presenting a user with one or more ~~than one~~ offering ~~eategy~~ categories, wherein each of said offering categories corresponds to a product or service type ~~available to said geographic location;~~

receiving from said user:

(a) said geographic location of said property; and

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(b) user's selection of one or more offering categories;

determining product or service plans maintained in said database (i) that correspond to said offering categories selected by said user, and (ii) that are associated with markets that correspond to said geographic location provided by said user;

generating for each offering category selected by said user, a summary of ~~one or more product or service plans available from one or more providers of said product or services to said geographic location~~ each said product or service plan associated with markets that correspond to said geographic location provided by said user; and

transmitting to said user said summary of offerings.

199. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 198, further comprising:

receiving from said user an order for one or more product or service ~~offerings~~ plans in one or more of said offering categories.

200. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 199, further comprising:

making available to each provider of said product or service ~~offerings~~ plans ordered by said user each said received order corresponding to said provider's product or service ~~offering~~ plan.

201. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 200, further comprising:

providing said user with access to one or more user accounts, each said account corresponding to a product or service ~~offering~~ plan ordered by said user.

202. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 201, wherein said one or more user accounts are maintained by said providers of said product or service ~~offerings~~ plans.

203. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 201, wherein said user may manage said user account.

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204. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 203, wherein said management of said user account enables said user to perform one or more of the following functions: verify the status of the order related to said product or service offering plan, update said user's profile related to said account, retrieve reports, pay for said product or service, modify said product or service offering plan, or terminate said product or service.

205. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 198, wherein an offering category ~~may comprise~~ comprises one or more of electric utility, natural gas, metered water, telephone, television, satellite, cable, internet, security system, change of address, post office, furniture, appliance, storage, moving, pet care, childcare, bottled water, periodical, newspaper, delivery, grocery, parking, club membership, motor vehicle, dry cleaning, prepared food delivery, insurance, housekeeping, driver's license, voter registration, financial, banking, wake-up/reminder, and repair and maintenance products or services.

206. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 198, further comprising:

establishing one or more relationships with one or more product or service providers in one or more of said offering categories.

207. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 206, wherein said one or more relationships are by agreement with one or more product or service providers.

208. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 198, further comprising:

providing brand partners with an account through which said brand partners may provide one or more customization elements or customer accounts.

209. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 198, further comprising:

providing brand partners with an account through which said brand partners may track usage of said automated method.

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210. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 198, wherein said offering categories comprise a plurality of utilities, products, or services.

211. (Canceled)

212. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 198, wherein said varying levels of geographic detail of said geographic location comprises one or more of a country, a region, a state, a county, a governmental subdivision, a street address, a 5-digit zip code, ~~or~~ and a 9-digit zip code.

213. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 212, wherein said governmental subdivision comprises one or more of a city, town, township, borough ~~or~~ and parish.

214. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 212, wherein said street address comprises one or more of a street name, post office box, rural route number, floor ~~or~~ and unit.

215. (New) The method of Claim 198, wherein said differing levels of geographic detail of said markets associated with each said product or service offering comprises one or more of a country, a region, a state, a county, a governmental subdivision, a street address, a 5-digit zip code, and a 9-digit zip code.

216. (New) The method of Claim 215, wherein said governmental subdivision comprises one or more of a city, town, township, borough and parish.

217. (New) The method of Claim 215, wherein said street address comprises one or more of a street name, post office box, rural route number, floor and unit.

218. (New) The method of Claim 179, wherein said differing levels of geographic detail of said markets associated with each said product or service offering comprises one or more of a

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country, a region, a state, a county, a governmental subdivision, a street address, a 5-digit zip code, and a 9-digit zip code.

219. (New) The method of Claim 218, wherein said governmental subdivision comprises one or more of a city, town, township, borough and parish.

220. (New) The method of Claim 218, wherein said street address comprises one or more of a street name, post office box, rural route number, floor and unit.